Interview with Richard B. Finn

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

RICHARD B. FINN

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Initial interview date: April 8, 1991

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Q: Today is April 8, 1991. This is an interview with Richard B. Finn on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. I wonder if we could start off with you giving me a little idea of your background—where do you come from, where did you grow up and your education?

FINN: I was born and brought up in Niagara Falls, New York. Born in 1917. I went to New England to college and law school.

Q: Where did you go to college?

FINN: I went to Harvard College and Harvard Law School. I studied the Classics while I was in college. World War II started my senior year at law school and I entered the US Navy as a Japanese language officer the summer of 1942. I was in the Navy until 1946. I worked then for a year at the State Department assigned to the Far Eastern Commission which was a policy making organization of the Allied Powers for dealing with occupied Japan.

Q: Could you backtrack a little and talk a bit about how you got into the language training? If you had taken Classics and all and suddenly to be in Japanese...

FINN: They were hard up for language officers. They had gone through most of the young available men who had some experience in Japan and China. Their criterion then became, by the time I joined up, that either you had some direct background in Asia, even though you didn't necessarily have a language background, or you had a very good academic record which gave promise that you might be able to learn Japanese. I had never been any nearer Japan than Detroit, I think, by that time. Those were my credentials.

Q: Where did you take the training?

FINN: At the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.

Q: There was another officer that I interviewed who said that he was talked into going into this by...

FINN: Commander Hindmarsh?

Q: Yes, Commander A.E. Hindmarsh, who got him in Boulder. This officer said it was a very unsatisfactory experience, that the language teachers really weren't prepared to do this.

FINN: I never experienced that at all and I am surprised that anyone would say that. The language teachers were a rather motley conglomeration of missionaries, Japanese-Americans, a few Japanese nationals, a Korean or Chinese or two. They were not professional language teachers, but they were educated people who, for the most part, knew Japanese well and in my opinion were quite good as teachers. I think most people who were familiar with the program would say that the results varied from good to startlingly good, with a few misfits. The students were, of course, all sorts of people from different backgrounds. But I found it a very fine experience and thought frankly that if you had to join the armed services, something like that where you think you are improving your own abilities to handle the world outside was a fine experience.

Q: I went to the Army Language School and took Russian during the Korean War. I agree with you absolutely. When you got out what attracted you towards the State Department?

FINN: I had every intention of being a lawyer, but I was in the language school for a year and then served in Australia, New Guinea, the Philippines and then on up to Japan. I guess my experience was that it was a new and exciting world in 1945 and although I didn't have any missionary complex about changing or improving the world, I thought maybe something like that would be interesting. I had worked for one summer in a law firm on Wall Street and assigned to work on an anti-trust case involving the American Sugar Company. This law firm had been handling the case for 14 years with the prospect of handling it for many years more. I wasn't so sure that I wanted to spend much of my life working on the breakup of the American Sugar Company.

Q: How did you get into the Far Eastern Commission? Was that the first thing that you did? Did you just go to the State Department?

FINN: No, I had a good friend who was made the number two staff man, Sam Stratton, who was later a congressman for many years. He asked me if I would be interested. I said I would, and so through his good offices—they were organizing the staff which was pretty much of an American show for the first few months anyway—I got a job. I was the secretary of the committees of the Far Eastern Commission that dealt with the constitution and legal reform, which was something that a legal background was useful for.

Q: Were you involved in working on the Japanese Constitution or was this pretty much in the hands of MacArthur?

FINN: The Constitution was written by MacArthur's staff without telling the State Department. It came as a considerable surprise to the State Department and to the Allied members of the Commission when the papers announced on March 6, 1946 that Japan had drafted a new constitution. General MacArthur later told Washington that this was

a Japanese initiative and that his staff only helped them. That was, shall we say, an elaboration of what really happened.

We then took part in consideration of some of the amendments. A number of changes and amendments were made and they went through the Commission. They were made over the rather heated opposition of the general, who continued to insist that this was a Japanese initiative and we would spoil it by our intervention—by the “threat of Allied bayonets”—if we kept it up. But I think people in Washington sensed that it wasn't quite that simple a situation.

Q: Did you have any contact while you were doing this? I mean here you are writing the constitution supposedly under the initiative of the Japanese but obviously MacArthur's headquarters was heavily into it, if not predominantly into it...

FINN: The government section of SCAP Headquarters wrote it.

Q: Was anybody along the way—either your Commission or MacArthur— talking to the Japanese?

FINN: Oh yes, MacArthur's headquarters did so after they had written it. They took one week to write it in secrecy. It was then handed to the Japanese. The Japanese were working on a draft of their own and had given some preliminary thoughts to MacArthur's headquarters, which found the Japanese ideas very reactionary. The government section said that if we don't tell the Japanese what to do, they won't ever do a decent job, and in addition this new Allied Commission would have Russians, British and everybody else telling us, the United States, what to do. So MacArthur thought that was a pretty good argument for doing it himself. He didn't even tell Washington what he was going to do. This is all a matter of public record. I had no intimate involvement in it.

Q: After working on this for awhile, were you then sort of amalgamated into the State Department?

FINN: I took the FSO exams in December 1945 as part of my idea of getting into the Foreign Service. I was accepted the following summer and left the Far Eastern Commission and took training at the Foreign Service Institute. I thought then that I had had enough of Japan and felt I would like to go to Europe. Of course, I was immediately sent off to Japan. So I became a Japan type.

Q: When you got to Tokyo in 1947, what were you doing then?

FINN: Our office had two titles. One was the Political Adviser's Office (POLAD)—as such we were a State Department Office— and the State Department representative in Japan to MacArthur's Headquarters. MacArthur would accept the State Department's office only on condition that it be a SCAP military headquarters office under his control and it was called in that capacity the Diplomatic Section. So the office and the man in charge really had two hats— the State Department hat and the MacArthur Headquarter's hat. MacArthur dealt with it only as part of his headquarters. No telegraphic messages were allowed back and forth to State in Washington. You could send airmail reports back and forth but it was very much under MacArthur's control. It wasn't oppressive, but almost everything you did was known to headquarters, and every now and then there was some unpleasantness because State Department views that the State Department thought were going directly to its representatives were in fact being read by MacArthur and his staff.

One has to point out that the State Department had a similar office in Germany that was very powerful. It was really the policy- making office for American political and economic policy towards occupied Germany. Our office in Japan had nothing like that kind of autonomy.

Q: It was HICOG, I think.

FINN: It became HICOG after the military command was dissolved. Military people, Eisenhower and then Clay, didn't want to get into this job. They didn't want the American

military wasting its people and talents on military occupation duties. MacArthur loved it and he felt he was pretty good at it, which he was.

Q: Yes, but what about his staff? What was your impression of his staff? You think of people like Willoughby et al. History has not been very kind to many of the people around him.

FINN: I think that is fair to say. The history is very ambivalent even about the top man himself. But in my opinion, MacArthur was an excellent supreme commander. He was not an excellent representative of the United States because he thought he was on his own. He liked to act as if he were the Allied Commander responsible not to the United States only but to the ten other allies as well, and he occasionally made that point very clear to the State Department which did not like it but which was not in a position to fire him or even argue with him.

Willoughby? Willoughby was in many ways a brilliant man. He was a remarkable diplomat, a remarkable linguist. A reactionary man politically, but he foresaw the Cold War before many people foresaw it. He probably had foreseen it all of his life being a German born and bred, a military man. I rather admired Willoughby, but he was thoroughly military. He kept close tabs on CIA, for example, which I think is not the way the US government should operate.

And of the other people, they were all terribly loyal to MacArthur. MacArthur came first. We all got along with our own level people quite well. The general officer level tended to be suspicious of the State Department. Several of the Chiefs of Staff looked upon our section almost as if we were the enemy.

Q: Well, what sort of things were you doing?

FINN: We had a political section, a consular section, and an administration section. We were, for want of a better description, the substitute foreign office for the government

of Japan. Japan had no foreign relations, no foreign representatives. They couldn't communicate with the Japanese nationals in Brazil, for example, or anywhere. We did all that work for them.

My own work was more semi-political, political-diplomatic. The Japanese had all kinds of problems with their relations with foreign countries. The neutral nations of World War II, for instance, had not been at war with Japan. At first Japan wanted to deal with them. That was not permitted. Anything Japan wanted to do through its Foreign Office involving foreign matters had to go through our office. I did a lot of work on the Korean minority in Japan, which was a knotty problem.

Q: It still is.

FINN: Yes. Then there was the Taiwanese minority. There were a lot of Japanese scattered around Southeast Asia and in China. I suppose the main contribution that I made was to try to work out some kind of arrangement that would take care of the Korean problem. One, to minimize friction with the Japanese and two, to encourage the Koreans to go back and live in Korea. MacArthur decided about half way through the occupation, and I think rather wisely, that the United States ought not to be solving Japan's problem with the Korean minority.

The Japanese would have loved to put them all on a ship and send them to Korea and not let them back into Japan. We didn't believe in doing that. They had the rights of liberated people in Japan. But the Korean minority was a rather activist, if not obstreperous, group in Japan and to some extent still is. They were hard to handle. MacArthur said that we are going to just get along with this problem and let the Japanese handle it when a peace treaty comes along. Similarly with the Taiwanese minority.

My own opinion was that it has been very good for Japan to have a minority. One of Japan's great problems in the world is its isolation and lack of easy relationship with the outside world. Japan had, of course, nurtured this isolation for centuries. Many of the

Koreans were born in Japan and have lived all their life there. The Japanese are bit by bit doing much better with the Korean problem but they are a long way from treating the Koreans equally and fairly.

Q: Did you get involved at all in trying to get the repatriation of the Japanese from the Soviet Union?

FINN: Oh, yes. That was another major function of the (Sebald) office. I was sort of the briefcase carrier for Ambassador Sebald on that. There was an organization called the Allied Council of Japan. The Far Eastern Commission was an 11 nation allied body in Washington, supposedly making policy. The Allied Council was a four nation body in Japan which was supposed to advise the Supreme Commander on the implementation of policy and refer back to governments any issue where they could not agree with MacArthur.

Very few issues were ever sent to Washington for advice or ever seriously debated in Tokyo. MacArthur broke the back of the Allied Council in a matter of half a dozen meetings so they only considered what he wanted them to consider or what he would let them consider. The Council did not have any body to report back to and was relatively impotent. MacArthur did not attend the meetings and delegated his power as chairman to the POLAD/Chief of Diplomatic Section. He used the meetings to do what he wanted done and one of the things he wanted done was to put pressure on the Russians to repatriate Japanese from Manchuria and elsewhere. The Council had its most tense and to some extent effective meetings dealing with the issue.

Q: Did you have any relations with your Soviet counterpart in that?

FINN: Not personally. I didn't deal with any Soviet. Only a few Americans dealt with the Soviets. My boss, Ambassador Sebald, did, and a few people in the G-2 section of Headquarters.

I was in Japan for three months right after the war as a Naval officer, returned to Washington for the year with the Far Eastern Commission and then returned to Japan in September, 1947. By that time diplomatic relations had solidified into the semi-Cold War relationship between the Russians and the rest of the diplomatic community.

Q: Who was your civilian boss at that time?

FINN: In the State Department office?

Q: Yes.

FINN: A man called Cabot Coville, an FSO-3. Mr. Coville was a diplomat of the old school, but he was extremely knowledgeable about Japan.

Q: So it was a pretty low ranking...an FSO-3 in those days would have been about the equivalent of colonel.

FINN: Yes. That is right. Ambassador Sebald was the head of our office after 1947. George Atcheson, a China hand and career FSO, was the first POLAD.

Q: So it was deliberately, I assume by MacArthur, kept at a pretty low level.

FINN: MacArthur didn't worry much about personnel or ranks, or things like that. His staff always resented any civilian who claimed a high rank because that was a particular strain on housing. Mr. Coville, however, who was divorced, had a room in the Imperial Hotel which was supposed to be for general officers, so our office did have a little clout in getting nice things like housing.

Q: During that time, you were there from 1947-54, how did things evolve for you? What were you doing while you were there over a period of time?

FINN: I spent two years in Tokyo to start with doing what I consider pretty interesting and useful work, like the Korean work and helping on the Allied Council, and starting to get ready to at least thinking about a peace treaty. Then I spent a year and a half as a consular officer. The State Department felt that every young officer should have a variety of duties.

Q: In Tokyo?

FINN: No. Consular work was headed up by a Consul General in Yokohama. I was in Yokohama for about a year and then I went up to Sapporo, northern Japan, for half a year. I went on home leave and came back to the Embassy in Tokyo. By that time the peace treaty was an important issue and I was again sort of the bagman for keeping the files and doing the initial drafting on telegrams about the treaty. The treaty didn't go very far for some time until Mr. Dulles took over in mid-1950.

In my opinion, Mr. Dulles' greatest contribution to American diplomacy was the Japanese peace treaty which he negotiated, not solely by himself, but he was the master hand of the whole thing. He did it before he became Secretary of State.

Q: John Allison was with him.

FINN: He was his number two man.

Q: To go back a bit, when you were acting as consular officer in Yokohama and then Sapporo, what type of problems were you dealing with?

FINN: The biggest problem I recall handling was the expatriation of American Nisei. We had a very tough nationality law and a tough lady called Ruth Shipley who was head of the Consular Division in the Department. If a person had served in the Japanese forces, or voted in an election or taken an oath to Japan in any capacity, we were to make

out a certificate of expatriation and send it in, and they were all automatically stamped “approved.”

The Nisei after a couple of years got some American lawyers on the job. Pretty soon the tide turned and later in the occupation all of these certificates of expatriation were torn up and certificates of citizenship were being issued. So we had a fine time first expatriating for a couple of years and then repatriating them thereafter. That I won't say is typical of consular work but it doesn't give you the most happy impression of the paper mill.

Q: Did you also get involved with GI marriages?

FINN: The State Department would not let American citizens in Japan marry Japanese nationals as long as Japanese were not entitled to become United States citizens. Then when legislation was approved allowing Japanese to enter the United States, the State Department removed the ban on marriages and many were performed.

We had a fair amount of visa work. For a long time Japanese were not allowed to go abroad, but in 1949 or '50 the US started letting them go abroad. A lot of students were sent to America; leaders under the USIA-sponsored visitors program went. Visa work was fairly routine. One problem we had was that G-2, Army Intelligence, had taken a lot of Japanese records; anybody who had given the Japanese government trouble prewar had a record with the Japanese police. G-2 made extensive use of that kind of information, and this was something visa officers had to consider.

I know one case of a man who became a very good friend of mine, named Tsuru. Tsuru had been sent to America as a teenager by his family in the mid-30s because he was a radical in high school in Japan and they wanted to get him out from under the Japanese police so he wouldn't be put in jail. He ended up with a Ph.D. from Harvard, but he had a police record in Japan. He couldn't get a visa to the United States for many years. He

spoke excellent English. But he had this alleged red background in US files. This may be an extreme example, but it is again the type of unpleasantness you got into.

Q: I was at the other end a little later in the Refugee Program and I think the military did tend to accept the judgments of basically the enemy power of who was for and who was against you. It was ironic, but that happens.

FINN: For that matter, G-2 began to look around at Americans and there were a lot of Americans who had liberal records. If you had been a member of the Institute of Pacific Relations, you were suspect in their view. One of the experts in our office in Tokyo was a very bright man of whom I thought highly in many ways. He had been in G-2 before he came to the State Department. He wrote Willoughby's memoranda to MacArthur saying that we had 15-20 communists working in headquarters, mostly in the economic section, the government section and the newspaper section, and we ought to fire them. MacArthur paid very little attention to these memos.

Q: After your consular work you said you came back to Tokyo and worked sort of as a bag carrier working on the treaty. What was your impression of the role the Japanese were playing in this treaty? Was this really a joint treaty?

FINN: The Japanese early in the occupation, a few months after it started, realized that there was going to be a peace treaty some day. They wanted it as soon as they could get it. They set up study groups in late 1945, studying issues like reparations, territory, overseas assets, everything that goes into a peace treaty. For several years they gave us their memoranda on these matters. We would say thank you very much and send them to Washington. Washington said that while all this was very interesting there was not going to be a peace treaty for a long time and when the time did get nearer the US was going to decide the territory or the reparations issue and not the Japanese. So the Japanese views did not count for much.

But the Japanese were realists about it and continued to send us drafted treaty proposals before Dulles came along, and did two or three quite miserable drafts calling for such things as 25-year allied commission, or a council of ambassadors to oversee implementation.

MacArthur to his credit thought that these Washington drafts were poor stuff. MacArthur knew his place in history was going to depend in good part on his work in Japan. I would say he was the first person to believe in a short, non-punitive treaty, not cluttered with all these restrictions. This was very much to his credit. He was not a diplomat. He had some funny ideas about diplomacy, but he wanted an early liberal peace treaty.

He envisioned, soon after the occupation started, that he might have a good shot at the White House. He knew that what he did in Japan would be quite important in selling himself to the American people. He had a time table: there was going to be an election in 1948, he would have to get things pretty well wrapped up by 1947, have a peace treaty, and then return to the US in time to campaign and cash in on his glory. So he wanted about a 2-year occupation, get it all done and out of the way.

I think MacArthur secretly—and maybe not so secretly—thought highly of the Japanese. He had only been to Japan a couple of times, but in his eyes the Japanese were disciplined people, and they were good fighters. The Japanese GI did what his officer told him to do, didn't ask questions, and did it to the death. That is an appealing kind of psychology for a military leader.

So, he wanted a peace treaty quickly, a non-punitive one. The bureaucrats in the State Department could not really come up with one. By the time it got through everybody in the State Department, the lawyers, the reparations people, the Pentagon, everyone wanted something from the peace treaty with Japan. But MacArthur's views were something to conjure with. When he said we should do this and not do that, the chances were this would carry the day. When Dulles came aboard, he and MacArthur saw eye to eye. It was a

happy marriage from the point of view of liberal Americans who wanted a quick and non-punitive treaty with Japan.

Q: As a practical measure you look at the other side of the equation, the German one. Didn't we just sign the peace treaty this year?

FINN: Yes, in effect that is right. We never had anything resembling a peace treaty with Germany, but the German solution was reached quite intelligently in my opinion. First of all Washington put the economic and political roles in the hands of the State Department and the State Department extensively relied on German and German experts. You had a man like Ludwig Erhard making German economic policy by 1948. The US had a Harvard professor by the name of Carl Joachim Friedrich who advised the Germans on what a democratic constitution should say. He was German-born and he worked easily with the Germans. He by himself was the equivalent an entire government section as far as our occupation of Germany went. The Germans got a basic statute by 1948 and that in effect led to a partial peace settlement with the Germans. That was when McCloy and the American civilians came in and took over from the military. So de facto we had a peace treaty by 1949. We didn't get it in Japan until 1952 because MacArthur decided that he wanted to stay in Japan until the peace treaty was signed.

Q: And of course MacArthur did not do very well in the 1948 Republican campaign. There was a trial balloon in some primaries in Wisconsin and somewhere else. It just didn't come out very well.

FINN: Exactly. He got nowhere.

Q: When you were working with Dulles...one of the things one gathers about Dulles was that he was a good lawyer but he really didn't understand other cultures. There is always the phrase, “Why don't you, the Israelis, the Jews, sit down and talk this over like Christian

gentlemen?" You get the feeling that he saw things in common us versus them, but not culturally sensitive. But peace treaties are very culturally sensitive documents.

FINN: I think that is two-thirds true. Dulles never quite understood the Japanese. I think they were strange little men to him. But on the other hand, he relied quite heavily on people like John Allison, who knew Japan well. Shortly after Dean Acheson gave him the job he sat down and wrote a memo on what kind of people the Japanese were. He said in this memo that the Japanese were people who tended to stick together. They were a very group minded people. They were also susceptible to leadership that would lead them in ways that they, not being a very sensitive or sophisticated people, might not want to go. In this sense the Japanese were very much like the communists, subject to dictation and leadership by a few strong people. And there is a fair amount to that kind of observation.

He had a number of things in his essay of that sort. I think most of the people in the State Department felt that Dulles was a smart enough man to learn that he was over-stressing certain aspects of Japanese psychology. And I think that is true. He and Yoshida, who was the leader of the Japanese government during the last half of the occupation, didn't get along at all well, really. But the saving grace was that they had pretty good staffs on both sides and they were able to do a lot of good business together, with Allison on our side and several senior Japanese on their side. Many of the important, early decisions and drafts were done by the staffs. They were doing what Dulles and Yoshida wanted done but were not quite able to pull off themselves. Dulles was, somewhat as you divined, not an easy man to deal with on this sort of thing. But, on the other hand, he was a master diplomatic craftsman.

Dulles and Yoshida had a lot of trouble with the defense arrangements. The Pentagon had certain requirements. Dulles was able to work with MacArthur on defense issues, but it took a lot of hassling to determine the exact security arrangements we should have. The Japanese were willing to give us bases as long as we didn't make them rearm. The Pentagon wanted both. How to handle that was a tricky problem. Dulles finally sat down

and in the course of a couple of hours wrote off a Security Treaty he thought would do the job. He didn't want to clutter it up with all the stuff about legal jurisdiction, bases rights, customs, whether tanks could use highways, etc. He said those things would come later. He drew up a short, simple, and neatly done draft.

It was a model for the Japan Security Treaty, the Philippine Security Treaty, the ANZUS Security Treaty, and later the Korean Security Treaty. Dulles was good at this. Likewise he was very good on the peace treaty. The issues were up his alley. He was an expert on reparations, property, and the like. So I must say that two men who did an outstanding job for their country on the peace treaty and deserve good marks in the history books were MacArthur and Dulles

Q: How long were you involved with the peace treaty?

FINN: I came back from home leave in early 1951. Dulles by that time was in charge. So I worked on the peace treaty from about April 1950 until April 1952 when it came into effect, and for many months after on problems related to the peace and security treaties. This story about Dulles is I think probably true. In 1950, the Democrats and Republicans in Washington were having problems with a Democratic President and strong Republican representation in both houses of congress...somebody said that more bipartisanship was needed. So John Sherman Cooper and John Foster Dulles were prevailed upon to take high positions in the State Department. Dulles didn't have to be prevailed upon really. So Dulles came in and did odd jobs in the Department for a few months and finally went to Acheson one day and said, “You know, you are getting nowhere with the Japanese peace treaty. What you ought to do is give one man responsibility, tell him you will give him one year to get it done, and if he doesn't get it done in one year, you fire him and pick somebody else.” In effect, Acheson said, “Okay, you are it.”

Truman wasn't happy. Cooper was more of a gentleman and liberal scholar, while Dulles had a real strong partisan strain in his makeup. But they gave the Japan job to Dulles.

There was very little partisanship in what he did. And even when MacArthur got fired a year later and it looked as if this might spoil the whole treaty arrangement, Dulles was a good soldier. He stuck with Truman and Acheson and finished it off.

Q: What was the effect of what you were doing on the Korean War which started June 25, 1950 and then leading up to and through the firing of MacArthur about a year later or so?

FINN: The Korean War was a strange experience for us out there. We didn't feel any particular tension or worry about our safety. I think the feeling that America was invincible, as it had shown in World War II, was still very much a part of our own attitude. Much less did we think that the local forces out there could give us that kind of trouble that they ultimately did. Even when the American forces were forced down the peninsula to the perimeter around Pusan in the summer of 1950, we didn't think there was a Dunkirk in the offing, although in retrospect we were not all that far from it.

Q: It was a closer run thing than I think we realized at the time.

FINN: We all had confidence that our side would win out and, of course, MacArthur did it again with the Inchon landing, a superb military achievement that seemed to almost end the war. Then, of course, in late 1951 the Chinese came in and we were in danger of repeating the same performance we had gone through a few months before. That shortly led to the firing of MacArthur.

I don't think any of us felt that the occupation of Japan would fall apart or fail or would be greatly damaged when MacArthur was ordered out. By that time the peace treaty was moving along. Dulles had gotten a draft by February 1951 that the Japanese had happily accepted. The Allies hadn't even seen it. This was a very curious way to run the negotiation of a treaty—to get it through your enemy first and then go tell your friends what you have agreed to and please don't upset the apple cart. Some of them didn't appreciate that kind of dealing. But it was America's show, we ran it our way, and they knew we were in charge. I think we were prepared to go and sign a treaty with Japan alone if that should

be required. The Allies could have done little to change it, but we never came very near to that.

Q: But also the Allies really weren't playing much of a role. Unlike in Germany where you had contiguous territory and occupation troops and all that. Japan was all our show.

FINN: The British, in fact, wanted our occupation to end in a hurry because they felt the longer we stayed, the more their commercial interests in Japan would be reduced, which, in fact, was the case. The British had been top dog in East Asia for a century. Here we came in and after World War II we were now on top. They didn't think that was a great deal for them.

Q: When MacArthur went then everybody wasn't running around wringing their hands.

FINN: No, I wouldn't say that. Bill Sebald, who was my boss, the head of the office, was certainly concerned. Just a word about Sebald: he was an Annapolis graduate, became a language officer in Japan, was in the Navy during the war as an intelligence officer; he left the Navy in the mid-30s to become a lawyer in Japan where his father-in-law had been a prominent British commercial lawyer and had a Japanese wife. Sebald rejoined the US Navy after the war started and became an intelligence officer. The State Department hired him after the war and sent him out in late 1945 as a lawyer to serve in the diplomatic section. When the man who was the head of it, a China expert, George Atcheson, was killed in a plane crash in 1947, MacArthur said he wanted Sebald for the job. The State Department didn't want Sebald for the job, of course, because he was not a State Department career man. They wanted to put Maxwell Hamilton in. But MacArthur's view prevailed. So Sebald was somewhat beholden to MacArthur. The State Department didn't make an issue of his appointment. Dulles thought well of Sebald. Sebald made his own reputation and did not have to depend on MacArthur to stay in his job.

Q: The treaty was signed when?

FINN: The treaty was signed in September, 1951 and went into force April 28, 1952.

Q: As an airman first class I was occupying Japan one day and was defending it the next. What did you do after the treaty came into effect?

FINN: We did almost exactly what we did before. I think we had to give up our house. That was one thing that hit most of us. All the enforced takeover of Japanese housing and buildings in the Tokyo area was reversed. So we all had to look around for some other place to live. But fortunately the US dollar was very strong so with our money we could go out and rent good places to live. Many of the Japanese who had nice houses that had been occupied by the Americans, for which they got very little in the way of rental from their own government, were now able to rent out their places on a commercial basis to Americans after the treaty. We went back to the same house we had when we first came to Japan in 1947. The treaty meant very little difference. We were all a little nervous but the Japanese seemed to feel the situation was about the same after as before the treaty. They were, of course, relieved the treaty was in effect. Their top leadership got along well with our people. There was no animosity or bitterness, little friction. The Japanese are a pragmatic, purposeful people in my opinion, and they set themselves about repairing the damage and getting back on their feet.

Q: As I say, I came in due to the Korean War just out of college and just a GI there and everybody loved it. It was great duty and we liked the Japanese. We certainly liked the Japanese women. There was not the feeling that they were sort of the under class.

FINN: To cite one mundane example. We no longer had MPs directing traffic downtown but the traffic moved along fine anyway. Where were you stationed?

Q: I was stationed at Johnson Air Force Base, just outside of Tokyo.

Now what sort of work did you do after 1952 to 1954?

FINN: I became, as so many of us seemed to in those days, a political/military officer. After the peace treaty came into effect, of course, there was a security treaty along with it. We set up a Joint American Japanese Committee consisting of military people and the Japanese Foreign Office people. We still have something like that sort going in Japan today, 40 years later. I was the State Department officer advising the American General or Admiral, whichever, on this Joint Committee.

A lot of the problems were diplomatic. There were many knotty problems. Criminal jurisdiction posed some delicate issues. The Japanese, to their credit, did not want to surrender all jurisdiction over crimes and offenses by American GIs, they wanted some division of jurisdiction that would be very much like the NATO arrangement, figuring that the NATO one would be an equitable type. The Pentagon didn't want to give it to them. It took a year before the US finally agreed to give the Japanese the NATO formula on criminal jurisdiction.

Part of the formula was that the Americans would request waivers for any criminal cases they considered important and that the Japanese would give sympathetic consideration to that request. That has been going on for 40 years. Any time we want to get a GI back they will give him back to us. And to our soldiers' credit they did not go around murdering Japanese, although there were a couple of unpleasant offenses. For example, on a target range once a GI shot and killed a Japanese farm woman who was picking up the brass shell cases which were quite valuable. The Japanese didn't go for that kind of thing, we didn't either. I don't think the soldier, his name was Ginard, spent any time in jail but he was tried and found guilty of a criminal offense, but his sentence was suspended and he was sent home.

Q: Did you have any problem with our military adjusting to the new status? Often everybody at the top agrees but there are certain perks which suddenly are no longer there at lower levels.

FINN: I don't recall that. I would think for a lot of people their status was pretty much the same. I know of no incidents or grumbling psychology. Even the top general moved to a much nicer house than the American Embassy residence where he had been living. We retained several rest hotels in downtown Tokyo so that the fellows could still get 25 cent martinis and a good steak dinner for very little. No doubt there were plenty of individual cases of unhappiness but it wasn't a big thing.

Q: Again and again the theme has come through that when you are trying to negotiate something, particularly status of forces, the country and the Americans there can usually come up with a pretty good way, but when it gets back to the Pentagon, the lawyers there seem to take a very extreme, unresponsive view. They don't seem to be knowledgeable or very good at dealing with the situation.

FINN: That is very true. I mentioned the matter of criminal jurisdiction. Those of us on the spot said why not give the Japanese the NATO formula, give it to them right away. The Japanese aren't barbarians. The Pentagon seemed to think that they were Hottentots. The military feel an obligation to get all foreign countries to treat our men abroad just as if they were in the United States. Well, they are not, they are in a foreign country and the Japanese and the Europeans would never cede to us on that kind of issue.

The military wanted another provision in the status of forces agreement: in case of an emergency, the American top military commander would take command of all forces in the Japan area, Americans and Japanese. Of course, the Japanese only had a kind of token force at that. But the Japanese didn't want that. Dean Rusk argued right up to the end to try to get it, but the Japanese refused. Finally the Pentagon agreed not to insist on it and say that if there were an emergency the two sides would consult on what they were going to do.

Q: So after the peace treaty went into effect you became a sort of political/military officer. Were there any major problems indicating any resentment on the part of the Japanese during your four years?

FINN: There were a couple of provisions in the security treaty that they didn't like. One of them was that in case of a large scale internal disturbance in Japan, our troops would be authorized to intervene, if the Japanese government requested it. That was something that we or the Pentagon, I am not sure who, wanted. In effect we would be interfering in their local affairs if there was some kind of demonstration or communist riots. They didn't like that. We gave up that right in 1960.

There were several things on that order. The most difficult area was the security arrangements we wanted to get, in particular an MSA, or mutual security agreement with Japan. We had them with all the NATO countries. In effect an MSA agreement means that the US would supply military equipment if the other government would agree to build up its military forces and cooperate with us in meeting the common threat posed by international communism. Well, the Japanese didn't see then—as they don't really see today—any great threat from international communism or other sources. To get them to sign the agreement took a lot of arm-twisting. The diplomatic people in the Japanese government thought that this was a nice way to get a lot of weaponry cheap. And further, they would not have to worry unduly that they would be sent off to fight the Chinese or Koreans, or somebody. The Americans would really be agreeing de facto to defend Japan. But a lot of the liberal Japanese and certainly the left wing felt that an MSA agreement tied Japan to the American capitalist, imperialist structure. They were not happy about that. That feeling eventually dissipated, but it lasted for about ten years in Japan.

Q: Was it an Embassy in 1952?

FINN: Yes.

Q: How did you see the "Soviet menace" at that time as regards to Japan?

FINN: Japan never had a strong communist movement. The peace treaty came into effect on April 28, 1952. Three days later was May Day. The labor movement had a big demonstration in Japan on May Day. We, the Americans, got the Japanese to prohibit the demonstration downtown by the Imperial Palace so the demonstrators had their first initial demonstration several miles away near Meiji Shrine and then marched downtown anyway. There was a clash with the police. I think I read that one person was killed. The workers threw a couple of GIs in the moat around the palace along with a couple of American cars. There was some fear that the communist revolution was here and things were going to be tough. Could the police control them, are we in for trouble?

There was one view in the Embassy that wanted to send a telegram back and scare the hell out of the Joint Chiefs by saying that we cannot count on keeping large military forces on the ground in Japan. We should prepare to remove them and keep only token forces. Cooler heads prevailed, and the telegram did not go out.

I did not personally see any great threat. My boss, Sam Berger, thought there was. And I still felt that America was number one and we weren't going to have to worry about any threats inside Japan. And, frankly, I didn't see any great threats from outside, despite the Korean War.

Q: Well, Berger had just come out of being a very important figure as labor attach in the UK where he was sort of our contact with the Labour Government. He was coming from European context on this, probably.

FINN: Sam was a fine officer and learned a lot about Japan. He was the political counselor and I suppose it was his job to see potential threats. Bob Murphy was the Ambassador and a tough-minded man. But when a country with Japan's background has a riot three

days after the nation regains independence and nobody knows really which way the cat is going to jump, you are well advised to look pretty hard at the situation.

Q: This is a real test.

FINN: Yes, it was.

Q: What was your impression on how it was handled in say five days retrospect?

FINN: My suspicion is that the military—remember we hadn't sent one GI home because of the peace treaty—felt, one, they were in pretty good control of anything that could happen in Japan, regardless of whether they had authority to intervene or not, and two, they had considerable confidence in the Japanese. The Japanese later developed their own military force and our military trained and worked with them. I think our officers felt the Japanese could rapidly muster four or five divisions of quite competent soldiers if they had to. Of course, Berger and the Embassy were thinking more of the long term political situation. If you got bloodshed with the communists fighting the Japanese defense force, you were in for trouble.

But I think most of us were oblivious to the communist threat or felt that the threat wasn't great.

Q: Robert Murphy had probably the most distinguished career in the Foreign Service actually coming out of the old Consular Service and then moving on. How did he run an Embassy? In a way it would seem that he was a fish out of water since he was such a European hand.

FINN: I liked Murphy and I thought he ran the Embassy quite well. He arrived the evening the peace treaty came into force, 3 days before the riot. He asked me how many men there were in the Tokyo police force. I said that I thought there was about 20,000. He said

that that was interesting since New York had 22,000. That was a natural question for a new Ambassador to ask: what are the local security forces like?

One thing about Murphy's style of running things which puzzled me a little. He was awfully nice to the middle and lower officers but was quite tough on his senior officers. He wouldn't quite chew them out in public but you could see when he was not pleased with their performance. I suppose top officers in any system have to solve that problem—how you handle people under you. Sometimes you can't handle them all equally well.

Q: Did you have any feeling how he dealt with the Japanese?

FINN: Murphy was very good with people. He had all the charm of the Irish and he used it. A man like Dulles was a rather impersonal and somewhat of a cold fish. John Allison could be that way too. Murphy was a very personable fellow. He always had cigars and the Prime Minister, Yoshida, liked cigars, so they always had a fine time together. Yoshida told Murphy the emperor advised him to give up smoking and he said he wouldn't do it. Murphy was 6 feet 2, and Yoshida was about 5 feet tall...Mark Clark, who was the senior general by then was about 6 feet 4...so it was something to see when you got Mark Clark and Murphy with Yoshida. But Yoshida was a shrewd fellow. His English was good and he knew the West pretty well. They got along well. Murphy got along from the start much better with Yoshida than Dulles did. Dulles and Yoshida were perhaps forced to get along well because Yoshida was the Prime Minister afterwards and Dulles became Secretary of State. I know Dulles once said that he couldn't understand Yoshida's English. I think Dulles was the kind of person whose antenna did not work well with foreigners speaking bad English. I may be exaggerating some of these things and showing my own prejudices, but I thought Murphy did quite well. He was a great fellow with people.

Q: Were you getting instructions at all from Washington? I mean did you find the State Department almost intrusive in your work? This was a very peculiar setup with the military in Japan.

FINN: Actually we didn't have much trouble. When MacArthur was there nobody told MacArthur anything and anything that came from State in the way of an instruction had to go through the military. When George Kennan negotiated a new national security policy for Japan in 1948, Marshall Green and the fellows on the desk thought SCAP was going to really cut back on some of the policies like the purge, that had gone too far. They wanted to give the Japanese more freedom to run things their own way. So they drafted telegrams to that effect, that we were going to reduce the purge—we had eliminated thousands of Japanese, mostly military, from holding public office—and sent them over to the Pentagon. The Pentagon didn't want to clear them because they knew MacArthur wanted to stick with what he had done. He didn't like to be second-guessed by the people in Washington. Those things were not pleasant and the State Department couldn't do much about it. By the time the treaty came along we still had a situation where the military was the preeminent arm of American policy in Japan. We had several thousand military men there. So the State Department was not unilaterally able to run policy for Japan.

Q: Your last question on this and then we will call it off for today. During this period we are talking about we have a corps of men who were working at our Embassy in Moscow and dealing with Soviet Affairs, Russian experts, and they were quite an elite in dealing with the Russians. What about the Japanese hands, the people dealing with this at the time? This is a very important time and I wonder if you could talk a little about some of the personalities?

FINN: Bill Sebald, who left Japan a couple of months before the peace treaty came into effect was an old hand on Japan. He had lived there for ten years before the war. His wife was half- Japanese. We had three or four people, older officers who had been in Japan before the war and knew Japan and the people well. They were not anti-Japanese or tough about Japan, but in my opinion quite realistic. The same thing was true of the military attach#s. A lot of the senior military people had been in Japan before the war. They had a lot of Japanese friends. Yoshida's daughter knew them all when these men

came back as part of the occupation. They used to take her out to dances and things like that. She knew English well and was very westernized as was her father. I guess I would say that we never had a large number of Japan hands. We never really had enough people to get spread around the Japanese government politics in a broad, deep way. But we always had enough people to get the minimum job done and more and more we got trained people who knew the language and were familiar with the country's record and the attitudes of the Japanese.

I would have to say partly that I think the State Department and Dean Acheson were not helpful. They did not like Japan hands. Dean Acheson in September, 1945 said he did not want to have anybody like Joseph Grew or Eugene Dooman, who were Japan hands, come out to Japan as the State Department representative. Acheson in effect said that he didn't have confidence in the old Japan hands. He appointed George Atcheson, a China hand, who went down in a plane crash in 1947, to be the head of the State Department office. And somewhat that same psychology seems to prevail even now. Take Mike Mansfield, by all accounts a very successful Ambassador. He did not know a word of Japanese when he went there and I doubt if he knows more than one or two words now. Ed Reischauer was an exception in the post-war era, like John Allison and Alex Johnson. But in general, Japan hands are not highly thought of. I think that is a conclusion you can draw from American diplomacy in the last 40 years.

Q: Thinking about it, this is true. You have people who are called in who really don't come with a great deal of knowledge of the area. As a kid we hated the Japanese, having just fought a war, but later we fell in love with Japan—the food was interesting, the beer was great as were the girls. Do you think this worked against Japan because there was a suspicion that the guys had gone too native or something?

FINN: Before World War II the Far East Division of the State Department was headed by a man called Stanley Hornbeck, who had very little familiarity with Asia but what he had was China. He had the Chinese attitude towards the Japanese. Look at Joseph Grew, who was

the Ambassador for ten years. He probably didn't know more than a couple of words of Japanese himself. He was very hard of hearing and probably couldn't hear what was said to him in any case. The feeling was that we hadn't been well represented there before the war, we were not tough enough, we did not tell the Japanese that they were going to get into trouble if they continued doing what they were doing.

Q: I guess when you think about it, our Russian hands were basically pretty tough. It was a difficult regime and it was easier to be tough. And that goes over well in the American political complex. You are not letting your side down.

FINN: Certainly under Bush and Baker, the present President and Secretary of State, the expert is not highly thought of. Even though one would have thought that Bush would have seen it a little differently, having been an Ambassador twice. I don't think Reagan and his team either felt sympathetic to the career people. Baker is supposed to have said that all foreign policy is domestic politics. To have your foreign policy succeed you have to have a successful domestic policy. It is true that if you have Congress against you, you are going to have a lot of problems. But on the other hand, I do think knowing what the foreign government thinks, and what foreign people are like, is worth something in foreign relations.

Q: We will call it quits at this point and will get back later.

Today is August 5, 1991 and this is a continuing interview with Richard B. Finn. Dick, we last finished your time in Tokyo in 1947- 54. You came back to the State Department from 1954-56. I wonder if you could tell me what you did then?

FINN: I was the so-called Desk Officer for Japan for those two years. I had three or four officers under me and we were the Japan political/military side of the operation. There was a separate economic office. We were the primary State Department office for Japanese political affairs. The big things were to assist Japan, which had become independent two years before, in 1952, to rejoin the world and to help the Japanese with some of their

problems...getting diplomatic recognition, becoming members of the United Nations. We were also negotiating a number of treaties consistent with Japan's new independent status —many on the political/military side like the mutual security agreement.

We also negotiated an Atoms for Peace agreement, which I think was something of a break-through. Japan, having been atom bombed during the war and having this allergy about atomic weapons, was still very interested in the science/technology side of the nuclear discovery. They were happy to have a nuclear peaceful use agreement, which they have made very good use of. It has assisted Japan, among other things, in developing so rapidly as an economic power.

That, I think, is in a nutshell what we did. It was a busy office and a busy time. The Japanese are busy people and a business- making people, so we had lots of things to do.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Japanese? At that time it was the Japanese Embassy. Were you dealing on equal terms or did you have to do some confidence-building?

FINN: The Japanese in my experience are different in some ways from a Western nation in terms of negotiation and handling problems. That doesn't mean that they are obsequious or deferential or give in, but they don't engage in straight man-to-man on either side of the table, laying it on the line or working out a compromise. The process is much more circuitous and trying to divine on each side what the other one has in mind and what he wants and trying to adjust the two positions accordingly. Agreement comes gradually.

In my view that is a rather admirable trait of the Japanese and I think probably other nations have it, maybe other orientals. The Japanese more than most. The Chinese, in my experience, are much more like us in laying it on the line and cutting down on the differences and then reaching an agreement. The Japanese felt then, as they do today, that America is terribly important to them. We were important to them because they had lost the war, we had occupied them and then had tried to help them get back on their feet.

We are important to them today because we are a very rich, powerful country and we have opened many doors for the Japanese economy and Japanese activities generally to enter and be so successful, as we have all seen. The Japanese, in my opinion, are not going to fight or be difficult with Uncle Sam when they see we take a strong position. I am getting away from 1954, but the point I am making is that I think the Japanese are deferential, no, obliging, certainly not obsequious, but on the other hand they want to be very careful that no situations in their dealings with the United States become hard obstacles that lead to a threat to the good relationship they think they have and we, for the most part, think we have. That doesn't mean that we don't have groups—we didn't have any in Washington in those days, but we have them today— who are somewhat inclined to say, “By God, they have no place to go, we will turn the screws on them to get them to agree.” We didn't do that. I think our American policy towards Japan has been remarkably good. Many people would say it has been too soft. But I think it has been rewarding for both sides. This was the beginning of that kind of relationship.

Q: Did you have any problems interpreting the Japanese way of doing to the Americans, like the legal side of the Pentagon or others who were used to doing things their way? Cultural sensitivity certainly was not part of our diplomatic armory in those days.

FINN: One good illustration of the problem has constantly surprised me and disappointed me a little bit. The Americans feel— they felt it during the occupation and even more so after Japan's independence and they feel it today—that the Japanese are still somewhat the samurai. They have this military tradition. They had the Kogun, the Imperial Army, in the '30s. The Pentagon and any number of senior people, diplomats, George Ball, Dulles and others, felt that we had to restrain the Japanese. Some in the State Department and the Pentagon felt that all we had to do was to unleash them and let them go and they would have a big army and would be our policemen in Asia. That has been a very prominent characteristic of American thinking about Japan since about 1950.

Mr. Dulles got the Germans to rearm officially and legally, and he could never understand why he couldn't get the Japanese to do the same. There was a lot of feeling that the Japanese and the Germans were the same kind of people. They were strong, organized, tough, purposeful people who would not only build up their economies but would build up their military forces and would be powers to reckon with in the world. But the Japanese said that they did not want to build up their military force and preferred not to be a military power in the world. They had seen it was not a good policy to have in the '30s.

That was one theory. The second is not directly connected. There was a lot of feeling about the nuclear issue that the Japanese had been so shocked at the damage by the two atomic bombings that they were going to have a nuclear allergy indefinitely. This was somewhat inconsistent with the first theory, but it was particularly true in the case of the Atoms for Peace program. A lot of people could not believe that the Japanese would want to have any kind of dealings with nuclear energy. But that wasn't so.

Q: At this time when you were dealing with the Japanese in this '54-'56 period, did you have any impact of McCarthyism at that time?

FINN: No. I think people who had any China connection felt it much more. Some of them were on McCarthy's list—John Service, Robert Barnett. We did have some touch of it though, now that you mention it. The only and prominent example was John K. Emmerson who was a career FSO and a Japan specialist. Emmerson, I am confident, was never a communist in either a legal or card-carrying sense or in a philosophical sense. He was also a man who believed that Japan had a very reactionary type of system before the war and it had to be cleaned out, revised and modernized. He was close to a Canadian diplomat, who was equally a prewar expert on Japan, Herbert Norman. Just one episode. Shortly after the surrender we had ordered the Japanese to release all political prisoners. The Japanese weren't all that eager to release their communist political prisoners but we told them they had to. John Emmerson and Herbert Norman went out to a prison in the suburbs of Tokyo, Fuchu Prison, and interviewed a group of communist political prisoners.

They brought several of them back to GHQ to interview and talk about things before they were officially released from jail.

That became a cause celebre in Japan, especially among the rightists in Japan and the right wingers, like the McCarrans and the McCarthys in the United States. They claimed Norman and Emmerson were communist sympathizers who were urging the Japanese to go communist and abandon their good relations with the United States. Emmerson and Norman were not doing any such thing. Herbert Norman committed suicide finally, in 1957, shortly before McCarran was about to start another hearing about communists and communist foreign policy pressures in the United States government. They were going to interrogate Japanese and Americans who had served in Japan. Emmerson's name was mentioned. He never made ambassador; I think the State Department probably felt a nomination would just not get through the Senate. But that did not affect me or the desk particularly. It did affect John Emmerson. Ambassador Reischauer brought him out as his number two in 1961. By that time the anti- communist storm had pretty much blown over, but it left a mark.

Q: You then moved for another two years, 1956-58, as assistant to Deputy Under Secretary Robert Murphy. How did you operate with him? You had already served with him I believe.

FINN: Right. Murphy felt, I think, that the senior staff officers in the State Department tended very much to be from European background. The two people he had before me, David Linebaugh, who had been in Europe, and Tapley Bennett, who was more a Latin American expert than anything else, I think. But I had served under Murphy for a year in Japan and he asked for me.

Now the staff assistant job was one not without some influence. Many of those who wanted to get to the boss tried to get to you and ask for help in moving paper or ideas or find out what the boss was thinking about. I don't think Murphy got along too well with

Dulles. Murphy was a little resentful that he was sent out to Tokyo in the last year of the Truman Administration, picked by Acheson with whom I think he did not get along with either. But after a year, Eisenhower and Dulles came into office and Murphy was replaced by John Allison. I think Murphy felt he was not given long enough time to do much in Japan.

When he came back Secretary Dulles wanted to make him Assistant Secretary for UN Affairs, which Murphy did not think was a very great job. But very shortly the Deputy Under Secretary position opened up and he got it.

I did think that Murphy wanted a variety of perspectives on the part of his staff people. We got along well. It was an interesting, busy job and I enjoyed it. I think it was one of the most useful jobs that I had in the State Department.

Murphy was an expert on and had an intense interest in Yugoslavia. He knew Tito well from his wartime experience. Tito was invited to the United States and Dulles couldn't for the life of him figure out how Tito got invited. He had a sneaking suspicion that Murphy had passed an invitation on to Tito. Dulles was enough of a partisan politician to believe that a person who was a communist, even though he was supposedly a dissident communist like Tito, was a bad guy. Dulles was up in the hospital at the time and he claimed others did this when he was out of action; I think maybe it was appendicitis. But Dulles may have felt that Murphy was not entirely on the Republican team even though Murphy had been very close to Eisenhower during the war.

Q: But you did have the feeling that Dulles and Murphy weren't quite walking in step?

FINN: Right. General Bedell Smith was the Under Secretary for a while and then Herbert Hoover Jr., maybe in reverse. They were both tough men. Herbert Hoover Jr. felt the State Department was full of leftists and took with a grain of salt anything they advised doing. Bedell Smith had a sort of mean, top sergeant mentality, although he was obviously a pretty good chief of staff. Murphy knew Smith and how to handle him. But Smith, who had

an adjoining office, would come in cursing away sometimes, which was very unpleasant for those present.

One interesting thing to me. You learn when you work on the fifth floor, of the old State building in those days, that the problems the top people had to handle were the same problems fellows dealt with at the desk level, except as they graduated upward they would sometimes get worse or become politically sensitive. But you felt they were the same kind of issues you saw when you were working on them down below. It was just that instead of having a Deputy Assistant Secretary to go to, you had the Secretary and the Under Secretary in the act.

Officers like David Mark who was the Yugoslavia desk officer, for example. He saw Dulles often about Yugoslavia. This was the period shortly after Yugoslavia had broken off from the Soviet Union. We were trying to keep them independent and free, yet not get too close to them.

I accompanied Murphy on a good offices mission to France and Tunisia in 1958. The UK and the US had agreed to try to mediate between in a dispute involving attacks on Algeria by rebels based in Tunisia. Murphy tried very hard and got an agreement, but the French Assembly rejected it.

Q: At that time did you feel both the hand of the White House and of Congress in the things you were dealing with?

FINN: We had lots to do with Congress. Walter Robertson became the Assistant Secretary for East Asia. The China problem was a big problem with Congress and had been for a long time. We had a fall- out from the China problem because the Japanese wanted to do business with China. We didn't want the Japanese doing too much business with China, we wanted them to do it with Southeast Asia. But the Japanese thought the best deal was with us and the second best deal was with China.

Dulles and Robertson tried very hard to discourage them from opening up and expanding trade with the US, and at the same time we were violently opposed to their trading with China. The Japanese let commercial people go around the backdrop without the government knowing; the government was secretly supporting them but had to explain to the United States how they could be concluding commercial agreements with China on a private industry basis without support of the Japanese government. Congress had an active interest in this matter.

Those were big problems. Japanese export of strategic goods with China and the Soviet Union was another recurring problem, although not as big as the issue of general trade.

Q: Walter Robertson was quite a figure in those days, how was he looked upon by Murphy and by Dulles from your advantage point of watching the papers and all this going back and forth?

FINN: Robertson was an engaging Southern gentleman, a banker with good humor. He had life and vivacity. Everybody liked him. I liked Walter Robertson. I remember he took me aside at a cocktail party once and said, “I understand that you are not entirely in sympathy with our policy towards China.” He wanted to give me a little lecture and I couldn't help but like him. I had to protest my innocence, and I said that I was not for relations with China. The Japanese liked the idea but we are against it.

Murphy got along very well with Robertson. Murphy liked people. If you knew him well enough you could tell from some of the comments he would make on some of the papers that would come through that he had people he enjoyed more and agreed with more than he did with others.

Q: I take it Dulles was not one of the ones he agreed with as much?

FINN: Right. Murphy was very strong on European things, especially France and Germany. Dulles wasn't all that strong on the background, tradition or personalities of foreign countries.

Q: Did you have the feeling that Dulles, from where you were, was taking a proprietary interest in Japan since he...?

FINN: Not really. Dulles was a businesslike rational man. He was also politically sensitive, of course, and I think he had some strong views on foreign policy. He carefully read basic communist documents. He felt that neutralism was negative, immoral, and futile. Nehru was one of the pet peeves of the State Department. And of course we had the later phases of the Korean War, which didn't wind up until 1953. And there again Japan had no direct role whatsoever, but was really a minor player on the international scene.

Q: You left for a four-year assignment to Paris as a political officer where you served from 1959-63. What were you doing in Paris?

FINN: I had two jobs, two years each. The first one was as POLAD to USCINCEUR—Political Advisor, United States European Command. General Nordstad was SACEUR and CINCEUR, Supreme Allied Command Europe and Commander-in-Chief Europe for American Forces. His American role was carried out 90 percent by a 4-star Army General, in the case of my period there, Charles Palmer. He was a very nice man. The military were a fine group of people to work with. Very receptive of the POLAD idea.

Our main role, really, was military assistance. We didn't make policy—where to store nuclear weapons and what kind of weapons, etc. But I traveled all around with the General as far to the East as Pakistan, the Khyber Pass, to Ethiopia and North Africa, and to Scandinavia. There weren't all that many problems, but, of course, the governments wanted all the weapons they could get for the best price they could get. They treated us nicely.

We did a lot of work on that kind of thing. I am not sure that my role was all that important, but we got all the State Department cables involving these areas and would show them to the General and his top staff. If they were trying to do something in Turkey, for example, we might tell them that it might not be a good idea to do something in a certain way or at a certain time because our people in the Embassy at Ankara felt the Turks would not react favorably to it.

That was the time too in 1959 when Khrushchev was invited to come to the United States by Eisenhower. I remember going to the General and asking if he had heard the news. Eisenhower had asked Khrushchev to come to the United States. The General said, “There it is, there is not going to be a war in my time in Europe.”

Q: How did you view the “Soviet menace” at that time from your position within the NATO Command?

FINN: The Berlin Wall, as you know, went up in 1961. Like you I am a diplomatic creature of the Cold War. The Russian menace and danger was a given and all accepted it and believed it. There was a period of considerable tension, I think, when the Wall went up. But no one was fearful of imminent war, I think. I think the Gary Powers over-flight of the Soviet Union, the U2, came along then too.

Q: A running sore or something like that?

FINN: Yes, a little more than a running sore maybe, but a force that any moment could blow up. The Allied role was to be ready for anything and to keep the pressure on to try to prevent a blow-up without being inflammatory or provocative.

Q: You were there two years and then moved over to the Embassy. What were you doing there?

FINN: I was the Pol/Mil, political/military officer in the Embassy. Most of our embassies had, and probably still do (1992), the big ones anyway, a political/military officer. I had one officer with me. I was separate from the political section but very closely connected with them. My job was really to work with not only the MAAG—we had a MAAG, the Military Assistance Advisory Group, we had the military attach#s and, of course, we did have the huge American and Allied military command right in the suburbs of Paris. So there was a lot of military activity of one kind or another.

I suppose my main problem was dealing with the French on the one hand as a sovereign government and then dealing with the American military on the other hand when there were bilateral problems between them, American warship visits to France for example.

The major problem the French had in my period, both when I was in POLAD and when I was in the Embassy, was the North Africa problem, the independence movement in Algeria. There was a threatened insurrection there. One night when I was at POLAD, the four top generals in the insurrection in Algiers declared they were going to fly into Paris and try to rally the forces against General de Gaulle and throw out the de Gaulle government. That was a very exciting time, although I am not sure I realized it at the time.

Q: What were the American forces there going to do? Sort of sit back to one side? What was the feeling within the NATO Command during this particular period of instability within the French Government?

FINN: I don't think anybody on the official American side felt that General de Gaulle would give in. I don't think that many people felt that the rebellious generals, or the cause of Algeria Fran#aise were worthy of support or that the generals were going to succeed. But they were top officers, they were like the Chief of Staff of the various armed services. The crisis blew up in a hurry. That they were going to do this was announced in the afternoon and they were to come in that night.

I remember I was rather slow about the whole thing. John Bovey, who was the acting political counselor in the Embassy, called me up about 9:00 P.M. and said that I ought to get in there as we should all get together to see what was going to happen and decide what we should do about it. So we did.

I am trying to remember exactly what happened. I can't recall that the generals flew in.

Q: No, they didn't.

FINN: Whatever it was it blew over. The bulk of the army remained loyal to de Gaulle. So within a matter of hours, certainly within days, there was no great threat of this rebellion taking place. But it was a pretty exciting event.

I remember another time the Russians closed the road from the western zone to Berlin, claiming they had to repair the road. It wasn't a complete blockage. So we had the problem of what to do about it. The Russians after a while caved in and allowed traffic to resume, but they insisted upon examining all the contents of every truck that came in and out of Berlin. We didn't want them to do that. That sort of thing happened from time to time. It was much more a situation of petty harassment than a threat of war.

Q: How did you feel in dealing with the French military at this time? Did you feel that they were somewhat distant from the NATO forces?

FINN: No. A lot of that sensitivity, it seemed to me, was in the higher political echelon, General de Gaulle himself and, of course, the people who succeeded him. The French military, like a lot of military, were very nice people. Bright, pleasant. Military people—as you probably know, certainly it was my experience as an FSO—had their own sense of diplomacy and camaraderie. The American military in Japan or France often got along with the foreign military better than they got along with Washington. So I have to answer that I liked the French military. I found them a very pleasant group of people.

Q: The one big thing when you were there would be in October, 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. How did that hit you at that time and what was the reaction in the areas you were dealing with?

FINN: What happened there, Dean Acheson was sent over by Kennedy to talk to de Gaulle. I don't think I knew that he had even come and gone. He flew in in a special plane. He and Bohlen, the Ambassador, went over to see de Gaulle immediately. De Gaulle was the soul of cooperation and understanding. Anything we wanted, any support we needed from him, he would give us. So it was total support.

Bohlen was a superb Ambassador in many ways. He was very bright, probably a genius at languages. He had marvelous French and his Russian was probably equally good. He had a great feel for the French. I think he had served there as a younger man. Perhaps he had studied Russian in France for a while. He and Couve de Murville, the Foreign Minister, were pals—they played golf together. So, in that context, we in the Embassy did not feel the French prickliness and sensitivity as much as many of the American community did. I found with the Quai d'Orsay people, if you wanted something from them you worked for it. You had to keep pressing them to do it.

This was very different from dealing with the Japanese where the pressures and tension, and policy differences and logic were really very minor. The Japanese were very self-centered about anything they did—what were they going to lose and what were they going to gain, and always in mind that they had to get along with the Americans.

But you earned your salt if you got deals out of a French diplomat. But the overall atmosphere was always quite good.

Q: You then moved back to the State Department from 1963-66 dealing with German Affairs. How did this come about?

FINN: Well, I knew Bob Creel, the director of German Affairs, quite well. He didn't necessarily want a German hand, he wanted someone with a variety of experience, so he asked me to be number two. I took it and liked it. It was a very interesting job. Germany was a very key nation in Europe, and we had Berlin also as part of the responsibility of the German desk. I made a lot of trips to Germany to talk about all kinds of problems with the Germans. I don't remember offhand any crisis type of problem. I know Khrushchev was replaced during that period but this didn't echo or make waves at my level when it happened.

German unification was a constant subject, but nothing ever emerged in any realistic way that would appear to make it likely.

Q: Vietnam was beginning to bubble up. Did that have any effect on our relations with Germany or was that too far away?

FINN: I am tempted to say very little. I can't believe that it did have much affect on our relations with Germany or with NATO. With the French, of course, it was totally different. Dien Bien Phu happened in 1954 just after I left Japan. By then we are talking about 1963. I remember the Tonkin Gulf resolution was debated in the Congress at that time, and like other desks in the Department we had to keep our German colleagues informed and win their support. We weren't doing very well in Southeast Asia, but on the other hand there was no impression we were going to be forced out of Vietnam.

Q: Or that we were going to make a major commitment at that time.

FINN: Kennedy started building up the commitment. That is what got us in pretty deep. I remember I was in his office as Deputy for German Affairs when the Test Ban Treaty was concluded in 1963. I was there with Gerhard Schroder, the German Foreign Minister. A secretary brought a note to Kennedy which told him that the Senate had approved the Test Ban Treaty. He told Schroder about it. This was only about a month, I think, before he was

assassinated. When he was assassinated Willy Brandt came over to attend the funeral along with the Chancellor.

Q: That was not a period of any great upsets.

FINN: Not that I recall. One likes to think that one went through more tension, more trouble. But I don't honestly recall too much in a way of concern about Germany, about a Soviet attack, or the course of the NATO Alliance.

Q: France was pulling out of NATO. Did you have a feeling that you would be putting more emphasis on Germany once France left?

FINN: When I was still in Paris, before I came back to the German Desk, Bohlen took it relatively lightly. He didn't seem to think this really changed much. The French were not an active or dynamic participant in NATO military activities. They always acted with a certain amount of reserve. Bohlen didn't see that their pulling officially out of the military side of NATO, while remaining on the political general side, would make that much difference. And I think that was sort of the view of the United States government. We were sore at the French, but everyone expected the French to be somewhat irascible and independent and eager to show their muscle sometimes. They had their own independent nuclear force going. De Gaulle felt that he had to have independent nuclear power in his own right. We had to pack up and move from Paris to Brussels and give up the NATO facilities in France, as well as move our military supply lines to Belgium.

I don't recall that things were much different after than before.

Q: You then moved over to Policy Planning for a year or so—1966- 67. What were you doing there?

FINN: I was the executive director of S/P. I was not a planner. I was the admin person. It was a very interesting time, really. Henry Owen was the Director of S/P. He had replaced

Walt Rostow. I remember when the Defense Department decided to build a multiple warhead systems on top of our missiles, the famous MIRVs. This was discussed by the Council. Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson was there. I didn't know him well, but he was a man of tremendous good sense and perception—they say he was a good poker player and I can believe it. He said at a S/P meeting that this would change the strategic balance rather radically if we do this. The Russians would feel that they have to do it and we would have the potential for a far more dangerous weapons conflict—potential on each side. But it didn't translate into any danger or tension necessarily at the time.

Q: What was your feeling while you were there in Policy Planning in this particular time—Rusk was Secretary of State, Johnson was President—that Policy Planning played in the way things operated in the State Department? Was there the feeling that you were making suggestions but not really a player?

FINN: I am trying to remember anything that Policy Planning did that was particularly consequential at that point. I have served in S/P twice. It is a little hard to know in either situation whether S/P work amounted to much.

The first time, with Henry Owen, he was not particularly close to Rusk, but he was a very bright articulate person. He was close to Rostow who was then over in the White House as LBJ's National Security Advisor. Dean Rusk was an intelligent, highly articulate man, but I don't recall that he had great interest in long-range planning. I guess I have to say that I am trying hard to think of anything that S/P did or came up with, or ideas they had, or special personnel with special influence. The one possible exception was Brzezinski. Henry Owen got Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Columbia professor, to come in for a year on S/P. He was a dynamo, a live wire. He did a number of papers, but I don't recall that they amounted to much or got very far. The Department tended to look upon S/P as a somewhat unhelpful or unwanted appendage. Brzezinski, I think, they looked upon as somewhat of a gadfly. I remember when Brzezinski finally left, Henry arranged with Rostow for him to have an interview with LBJ. LBJ wanted to polish his credentials with the

intellectual, academic world so he had a half hour with Brzezinski. The picture that came out was rather amusing because it showed LBJ looking rather bored as Brzezinski talked away.

I remember one time George Kennan came down when he was working on his memoirs. We gave him a desk and all the papers that he wanted. He talked to the group at one point and some of us took him to lunch. It didn't have much to do with current policy problems but it was an interesting experience to have.

Q: You were an inspector for two years.

FINN: Right.

Q: I thought we might hop over that period if you don't mind?

FINN: I would like to say that you learn a lot being an inspector. I don't think I was involved in anything critical. The first year two of us did Indonesia in 1967. Indonesia was having a lot of problems. Marshall Green was there as Ambassador. But it was emerging from the problem period caused by an attempted communist coup in 1963, and the situation had quieted down. But the situation was getting critical in Vietnam.

I went to Iran where there seemed to be no problems at all. India was quite exciting, Chester Bowles was the Ambassador. He was an idea man.

Q: Did you have the feeling coming from outside that someone like Chester Bowles got so engulfed in Indian affairs that our Embassy in New Delhi was reflecting more India than sort of a even handed US policy dealing with India-Pakistan and all the problems there?

FINN: Bowles was a very dynamic man. He loved to talk, was a very friendly, outgoing fellow. He ran interesting staff meetings. I did not quite get the feeling that you are describing, although I remember hearing that when Nehru died Mrs. Bowles joined the procession of family and worshipers wearing widows' shrouds going down into the Ganges

River for the depositing of the ashes. This struck me a little bit “going native,” but you could equally say that she admired Nehru and was showing her feelings.

I guess there aren't any real highlights to talk about during the inspector period.

Q: Then they brought you back to your early specialty, Japan from 1969-70. You were what?

FINN: I was Country Director for Japan.

Q: Were there any particular issues during this time?

FINN: The two big things were that we did an NSC policy review paper and the return of Okinawa to Japanese control. The new administration under President Nixon had come in and we did an NSC paper the main purpose of which was to see whether we could agree to the return of Okinawa to Japan. It had to win the support of the Defense Department. We did the paper and Nixon and Kissinger decided to go ahead with the return of Okinawa. Those were the main jobs I had in my year and a half or so as Country Director.

Q: That, of course, was a major step. How did you deal with the Pentagon? Did they feel you were a bunch of stripe pants guys giving away the store, or did they understand that this was an issue beyond just plain military?

FINN: Certainly no opposition and no resentment and no effort to drag their feet or anything of that sort. I think they accepted the decision by the President. And, after all they did not have to pack up and leave. They retained all the rights they had before except that they had to remove the nuclear weapons on Okinawa.

Q: We were still there, more or less.

FINN: Right. That was the same thing in Tokyo, of course, in 1952. We didn't give up an inch of land or send back one GI because of the peace treaty and we did the same thing in Okinawa after the so-called reversion, except for nuclear weapons.

Q: As you dealt with this, did the mayor of Naha play a major role?

FINN: The so-called governor of Okinawa was a man called Yara. He was a socialist and a school teacher and very eager to get the American presence reduced. He was against rearmament, defense and all that. But he was a very engaging person and you couldn't really get mad at him. Although he would make quite strong speeches on the stump, when you talked to him he was quite rational and very understanding. It was not a problem.

But there was a lot of bureaucracy involved in the negotiations before the Japanese could take over the administration of the island. We had to give up certain privileges and activities like the USIA broadcast station there that the Japanese didn't like. They did let us keep it but they wanted to have an agreement on what it could do and could not do. Things like that. But the whole operation really went quite smoothly. It was very well handled, I think. Alex Johnson, who had come back from Tokyo to be the Deputy Under Secretary of State, was really the mastermind. Kissinger and Nixon were quite helpful and cooperative all the way. It was a good operation, I think.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the Nixon and Kissinger foreign policy apparatus knew what it was doing?

FINN: Yes, I think Nixon was very well grounded, very interested and very astute about foreign policy. He used to travel regularly when he was out of office in the 1960s and he would always go around and call on heads of government. He was helpful with the local ambassador whom he would clue in on everything and take along on calls. You couldn't help but feel that Nixon liked to do this and had a real empathy for the problems of American foreign policy.

Kissinger, Nixon's National Security Adviser, didn't do much with Japan, as I recall. I think Kissinger, as he said himself, didn't find the Japanese easy to talk to or easy to discuss problems with. He found Zhou En-lai when he went to China in 1972 a very sympathetic person whom he could spend hours talking with. He never found that kind of counterpart in Japan. The Japanese are different, as we were saying earlier, they are not prone to lengthy discussion and analysis.

Q: Dealing with Japan over a period of time, did you have the impression that there is a problem because the Japanese don't seem to be able to develop a close personal relationship which helps discussion and negotiations—not just language, but cultural problems?

FINN: I think you are right. The Japanese Foreign Office produces some remarkable people who know English extremely well as well as America and our outlook on the world. But they don't make the policy of the Japanese government. Other bureaucracies are more influential in most cases. The businessmen are not that well versed in international affairs. Even if a man has had a couple of years in New York as a representative of a Japanese business, he is not likely to be a powerful man in the hierarchy back home. So the thing is structured in a way that the people who are familiar with the West and easy for us to do business with are not really the basic policy makers or actors in the Japanese government.

This man who is now (April 1991) Prime Minister, Kaifu, is a remarkable exception. He is really quite personable. But the Prime Ministers tend to be people who don't speak any English, have not spent much time abroad and are rather wooden when it comes to any kind of meetings like a Seven Nation Summit. That is a problem with Japan. Japan is not yet in the international world to the degree that it ought to be. I have on occasion thought that one of our greatest weapons is the English language and the day will come when a lot of Japanese will speak good English. Japanese kids start at age 12 studying English and study it all the way through college, but they are not good at speaking it. A curious

phenomenon. We are far worse in speaking Japanese so we cannot blame it culturally on them in any way. But there is a fair distance to go for us and to get the Japanese together.

Q: Then you moved to Manila, 1970-71, as Deputy Chief of Mission. How did that job come about?

FINN: Well, Marshall Green asked me if I would like it. He was the Assistant Secretary. I thought it would be interesting to take it and learn a little more about the area, so I did. I didn't know much about the Philippines. I didn't know our ambassador there.

Q: Who was our Ambassador?

FINN: Henry Byroade. The Philippines was a very interesting place. The culture gap between us and the Philippines is surprisingly narrow. They speak English and the Catholic faith is strong. But I have often felt that although they are engaging people, and well educated, they can't run a government. Somebody said that we brought them democracy but we didn't give them the sense of responsibility and a bureaucratic system that would support a strong democracy. That is largely true. This was the time that Marcos, who had been running the country as elected President, began to get nervous. And there was a fair amount of communist activity. I hadn't been there more than a few months when they suddenly told us that everybody had to have a bodyguard assigned to him. So you had people guarding your house, people riding in your car when you went somewhere. It was a scary experience.

Q: Henry Byroade had been Ambassador in a number of places. How did he operate?

FINN: Byroade was a shrewd man. He felt that he had to get along with Marcos. Marcos was the Philippines for most diplomatic purposes. So Byroade made sure that he got along well with Marcos and Mrs. Marcos. Both of them were very engaging, attractive people. I went over a number of times when Byroade was on leave and found them very interesting people to meet with, very receptive, very friendly, very helpful to the United States.

One situation that was really very difficult for all of us, and particularly for me. This was the time of the Allende scrap in Chile. Mrs. Marcos told Byroade one day that she and her husband were terribly afraid that the Philippines faced a very similar threat in the form of communist threat to the government, a political threat at first but backed by violence to attempt to take over the government. Naturally this was reported to Washington. I think Mrs. Marcos had gone to the United States sometime around then and she also told people like Richard Helms of the CIA the same thing. It was pretty scary in Washington to have the wife of the head of a friendly government say that the country was under the threat of a communist takeover as in the case of Allende. So Byroade wanted to give support to Marcos.

Byroade was very unhappy with me because when he was away I took out to lunch the leading opposition figure, who was Benigno Aquino, who was later assassinated and whose wife became President of the Philippines. I looked upon my job requiring that I know what was going on in the Philippines. Aquino also happened to have very good Japanese connections. I remember going to a dinner in his house given for a prominent Japanese visitor. I didn't think I was consorting with the enemy or with the potential communist threat to the Philippines. You couldn't believe for an instant that Aquino, who was a very articulate, talkative man who knew all about America and had a lot of American friends, was somehow or other an agent of the Kremlin, even though the Philippines was a kind of wide-open place.

Q: In a way did you feel that the Marcoses were calling the shots as far as naming what the threat was which inhibited us from dealing with this in a normal way?

FINN: I think that is right. Marcos, in my opinion, was blowing up what was admittedly a nasty problem, as it was for a long time afterward in the Philippines. But never an unmanageable one or one threatening to take over the whole system in the Philippines.

When Marcos and his wife said these things to Byroade, Byroade, I think, felt that we had to take some steps to protect ourselves and the American position in the Philippines.

Q: How was this threat seen by the political section and the military section in the Embassy at the time?

FINN: Nobody would try to claim that there wasn't a leftist threat. Whether it was an Allende type of threat—of course we didn't know that much about Chile—Allende, after all, was strong in winning elections. Marcos might not have been able to win an election, so one could say that if there was an election Marcos might lose and that would reinforce an Allende-type argument. Marcos' popularity had been going down as the country was not in very good shape. So there were enough bad things and scary things so that we were battening down the hatches.

Q: At the time how did you and the Embassy view Marcos?

FINN: Frank Underhill was the political officer then. I think he would have agreed that Marcos was motivated in good part by a desire to retain power as much as fear of a genuine communist threat to the state. So that we had to be careful to separate the two forces and not become the tool of Marcos. In some ways, I felt, the Ambassador was willing to report on to Washington the Allende argument without saying definitely that there is some truth to it. But how much truth there was, how serious the Allende type threat was, was a little hard for us to estimate and we did not want to overreact. So I think we went along with the head of government, who was our friend and supporter and would do almost anything we asked him to do.

Q: What led to your early departure?

FINN: I think the atmosphere in Manila and Byroade's feeling that I was not in sympathy with the Allende argument; I also felt that Mrs. Marcos, in particular, was an actress who was dramatizing the situation. Byroade said I was trying to “undercut” him.

I had more problems with Byroade on the personal side. He did not like my wife. My wife went to a New England college and is a serious person. Byroade was well known for seeking out attractive women. I know having talked to others that Byroade had a reputation for this type of thing. He told me once that Mrs. Marcos offered to set him up with a “pad downtown” anytime he wanted it. He could have a place to stay and girl friends and anything he wanted. He said the problem was that he was too old to take her up on it.

He called my wife in one day and said, “I understand the Embassy Women's Club is raising money for a scholarship fund for young Filipino women to go to America for education. I want you to know that my wife and I don't believe that Filipino women need more education. So your group should give up this plan to have an education scholarship program.” My wife found that pretty hard to take. She was a blue stocking type and not his type of woman.

Q: Being married to a blue stocking type myself, I know exactly what...

FINN: Yes, but it shouldn't happen in the Service like that, but it does. At the end Byroade called me and my wife in and started by telling her that what he was going to say might give her a nervous breakdown but he would say it anyway. He had decided that the best thing was to get me and my wife sent home. So he did. The Department did not argue or investigate.

Q: So you came back. What were you doing then?

FINN: Very soon after I came back, maybe a couple of months, they assigned me to a group working on the Panama Treaty negotiations. This was 1971. Robert Anderson, a prominent Republican and former Secretary of the Treasury, was appointed special emissary by President Nixon to see if he could work out a treaty with the Panamanians. I admire Anderson. He had been a very important man in the Eisenhower Administration.

Q: He was Secretary of Treasury.

FINN: Eisenhower allegedly said at one point, that Robert Anderson was presidential material. But whatever happened? He defrauded a rich woman and got into financial trouble, and he may have gone to prison. It was pathetic.

We went down to Panama a couple of times. I liked Torrijos, who was the strong man in Panama and head of the National Guard. But he was a boozer and a womanizer.

We weren't going to give the Panamanians much. We weren't ever going to agree to give up the Canal. We would give them a share of the operation and more rights in the Canal Zone. But that didn't work. Curiously I ended my career doing much the same thing but not with the negotiations. I was the coordinator for the Legal Adviser's office. I was, after we had got the treaty negotiated, a member of a task force working for Senate approval. Herb Hansell, the Legal Adviser, offered me a very good job as a lawyer and I was tempted to take it.

Q: You came back in 1971 and then what did you do?

FINN: I was with the Panama Canal negotiations for about a year and a half. Then Joe Neubert, the deputy of the Planning Staff, asked me if I would come to work with S/P. They had a yearly meeting with the Japanese Policy planners, one year here and one year there, and they wanted someone to be the manager for these meetings. I thought that was something I could do, so I took it. I had worked in S/P previously in 1967-1968 as executive director.

We were not very important in the early period. Bill Cargo was the head of S/P. Then Jim Sutterlin came in. When Henry Kissinger came over to the Department as Secretary in 1974, he brought Winston Lord from his White House staff with him to be head of the Planning Staff. He had a lot of initiative and good ideas. My impression though was that Kissinger was not a man who needed much policy planning. He might read the papers

we prepared, but he had in his head what he was going to do. I know we did a long paper on Japan, I must have spent a year working on that. Kissinger had said in a Chiefs of Mission meeting that he could not understand how Japan could go on indefinitely being an unarmed weak state when they had become such a powerful economic state and were obviously a nation that could play such a major role in Asia. He couldn't see how they would remain a weak, minor political force in the world. So we wrote a paper on whether or not Japan would become an important political/military force in addition to an economic force.

Mike Armacost, who is now our Ambassador to Japan, and I did most of the paper, and we all agreed that because Japan was doing very well in the kind of system it had then, it was not likely to change soon, especially since Japan had done very badly under a military system in the '30s. We felt that if we handled our relations sensitively, the Japanese would not raise waves and try to do things differently. This is the way I feel about Japan today.

Q: It makes great sense not to get the Japanese too active in foreign policy. If we have interests there, why have another player who is obviously going to take a somewhat different tack, it just confuses the issue.

FINN: If Japan, whether we push them into it or they decide themselves, becomes a strong power, builds up their military, they are not going to do everything we want them to do. They would then do things they want to do. I am a little nervous about so-called checkbook diplomacy with Japan. Going to them saying we need $13 billion to pay for your share of the Gulf War which ended a week later, and then happily taking the money and saying we needed more due to the exchange rate, doesn't seem like a good way to handle an ally. But it shows you how far the Japanese will go in cow-towing to Uncle Sam.

Q: After dealing with the Japanese bilateral policy meetings, I take it they were interesting but not of great substance as far as dealing with foreign policy.

FINN: Right. I am not sure that we Americans, for all our pretensions, are great policy planners or believers in policy planning. You take the Korean War for example. Our policy was to avoid involvement in Korea. The day the North invaded the South, we threw all of that in the trash can. We went right in and counterattacked with all we had.

In Iraq look at what April Glaspie says to Hussein in July and the next day we adopt a new policy.

Policy planning is good. Good ideas are needed. Eisenhower said it very well: he said something to the effect that all plans are useless but planning is essential. Planning helps you know what you have, but it doesn't tell you exactly what to do the day after something happens.

Q: But you are not putting it all together after the fact.

FINN: When there is a crisis, you can go in and pull something out of the file cabinet. Twenty-five percent of it may be useful.

Q: Then you did what?

FINN: I worked on policy planning 1970-73 until the Panama Treaty had been negotiated and was up for a tough fight for ratification. Everybody knew that, they wanted me to help out. I knew some ARA people from my previous experience, and they said fine.

After that I soon retired. I was getting up to the age limit anyway. There were problems with voluntary retirement and all that kind of thing. By then I decided I would leave, so I did.

I was also having promotion problems actually. When I was with S/P, Joe Neubert wrote my report. Whoever was the Assistant Secretary for Policy Planning signed it. I got rated in the 5th decentile—about the middle of the class. The next year Joe Neubert again wrote

it and it wasn't much different, in my opinion, than the report the previous year, but I was rated several decentiles lower. Now, whether there were other factors, I don't know. But I complained to Carol Laise, Director General of the Foreign Service, about it. She said that is just the way it goes. One promotion board can take a piece of paper and rate you here and another board can take a similar piece of paper and rate you there, but that is the way the Foreign Service promotion system works. I didn't find that very satisfactory. So I chose retirement before there was more trouble.

I might add that I feel strongly the Foreign Service does not have a graceful system for retiring people who have spent many years giving their best.

Q: Well, I want to thank you very much.

End of interview